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NSC BRIEFING NOTES

Western Division
7 June 1954

LANIEL GOVERNMENT'S PROSPECTS THIS WEEK

- I. This week's schedule in National Assembly calls for:
 - A. Hostile interpellations in Indochina due on Tuesday 8 June from both Socialists and Gaullists
 - B. These opposition speeches will probably take up all 8 June session and possibly part of 9 June (evening session planned for 9 June if necessary)
 - C. Government defense may not be completed by 9 June
 - D. If Laniel demands vote of confidence, possibly early AM of Wednesday 10 June,
 - E. Required 24-hour delay would then postpone decision until 11 June at the earliest.
- II. Current (i.e. pre-debate) outlook seems most crucial in life of Fourth Republic.
 - A. Laniel facing stiffer opposition in Assembly than hitherto
 1. Most deputies increasingly impatient over lack of progress at Geneva
 2. Anti-EDC forces among center and right parties may try to use Indochina issue to overthrow government because of two recent pro-EDC developments:
 - a. Socialist and Popular Republican congresses of 29-30 May boosted EDC chances
 - b. Official announcement expected soon on Saar agreement--remaining EDC condition.

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- B. Nevertheless, Laniel may be able to hold on
1. He will lean heavily on positive steps he has taken to shore up defenses (*spell out*) ←
 - a. Protection of expeditionary forces
 2. Coalition parties unwilling to accept onus for crisis while Geneva still offers any hope of Indochina settlement
 3. Opposition still unable to agree on a successor to Laniel
 - a. Constitutionally, 314 opposition votes required to overthrow the government,
 - b. Radical Socialists reported to have readjusted their votes at last minute on 13 May when first count showed Laniel needed several more votes
 4. Laniel exploiting this situation to his advantage
 - a. Before 13 May vote Laniel reportedly stated that:
 1. He would refuse to resign if the opposition gets less than constitutional majority.
 2. He would push for new elections if opposition did gain a constitutional majority.
- C. New factor, reported by Ambassador Dillon on 4 June, is increasing parliamentary view that new elections would be desirable, despite Geneva conference.

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1. It is argued that:

- a. Forming a new government in present Assembly might take as long as forming one following new elections,**
 - 1. Elections would occur 20-30 days after dissolutuon.**
 - 2. Assembly convenes three weeks after elections.**
- b. Success of pro-EDC candidates in ~~XXXXXX~~ recent by-elections indicates that new Assembly would be more pro-EDC**

2. Against new elections it is argued that:

- a. Recent by-election victories were anti-Communist rather than pro-EDD;**
- b. There is good possibility that Communists would capatilize on general dissension among other parties to increase their parliamentary representatbn.**